

## Sermon Outline.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP.

MT. II, 21.

LECTURE II.

### I *Presuppositions.*

To begin I assume that we all believe in the principles of Christian Ethics, even those of us who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ nor profess the Christian religion, will not dispute the correctness of Christian morals. This the rationalist or atheist will not do.

1 We believe that Christian morality is co-extensive with human activity that there is no sphere of life exempt from the moral law. There is no voluntary act of man great or small, public or private but that is amenable to moral law. It is universally regnant.

2 As Christians, we believe that Christianity is the absolute good; that the Kingdom of God in which these principles find their most complete exemplification is the supreme end of creation. Christianity then must be and is comprehensive of all good. There is nothing good but that belongs to it and is taken up by it. The family is a good; the church is a good; and the state is a good. Each of these is an end in itself, and a worthy end; but their worthiness consists chiefly in the fact that they are means to a greater end. That end is the Kingdom of God. They are goods but not the absolute good. The absolute good, the supreme end is the Kingdom of God—the perfected individual living in the perfected society—the new Jerusalem—the City of God. Rev. xxi:1—xx:5. Not only are all goods comprehended in this absolute good, but whatever is not in some way a means to this supreme end is not a good but an evil; and the sum of things that do not subserve but tend to thwart this purpose constitutes the Kingdom of darkness. This is the touch stone by which every act and every institution is to be tried.

3 It follows from the above, that if I want my work to last and be of permanent good to this and future generations, I must act according to Christian principles. I cannot exempt myself from moral law.

(1) I cannot do known evil for money.

(2) I cannot for a money consideration grant another the privilege to do evil.

(3) I cannot do evil for any consideration so that good may come; I must "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good."

(4) If evil exist at all, it must be against my protest, by my sufferance, and not by my permission. It must exist on the "Grin and bear it principle"—because I cannot help it. Up to this point I am guilty.

4 Allow me to repeat for emphasis that these principles are co extensive with human activity; and hence are as applicable to the state as to the individual or the church. When we act at all, in the home, in the church, or in the state, we must act in harmony with these principles.

### II *The Sphere of the State.*

One's idea of the sphere of the state has much to do with determining his civil duties. One's efforts will be given to realize what he really believes to be the true ideal state.

1 The Anarchist would give government no sphere. He says let every man be a law unto himself. That "the powers that be" are of the Devil. He believes, at least professes to believe, that it is his duty to destroy the existing governments. His one civil (?) duty is destruction; his one method is violence; his one instrument is dynamite.

2 Others say the state is founded upon the idea of right and that alone. Government exists solely to protect the people in their natural and covenanted rights—to secure justice. It is a kind of enlarged police armed with the cudgel of authority to see that individuals and corporations keep their contracts and nothing more.

3 Others very much enlarge the sphere of Government. If the Anarchist goes too far in one extreme the socialist goes too far in the other. One gives every thought to the individual; the other gives every thought to the state. This is called the paternal theory of government. The state is a kind of guardian angel. It not only looks after strictly civil, and commercial affairs; but it intermeddles with strictly individual affairs. It tells a man what kind of work he shall do, how much of

it he shall do, and what he shall get out of the common treasure for doing it.

4 A truer conception is that of Milton. He says that government ought to be "one huge Christian personage." Hence its function is not confined to justice. Its aim should not be alone to get men to live by the golden rule but by the law of love. It cannot enforce the law of love. It ought to enforce the law of right. It must see that the ends of justice are secure to all. But it ought to do this in such a way as to encourage men to live benevolently as well as righteously to "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

(1) The ideal Christian State will do all in its power to break the arm of evil, and as soon as possible it will smash its head.

(2) It will do all in its power to make a true and noble life possible to the humblest citizen. None of its positive acts will encourage evil, neither will they discourage good. That is the best state that makes the best men. Every state and every civil institution must be tested by the kind of men it produces or tends to produce. While government cannot make character, it can make it possible, and it can and must protect those who are honestly striving for it.

5 From this it follows that the ideal state is an aristocracy.

Not, however, an aristocracy of birth or wealth; but an aristocracy of intellectual and moral character. As the highest in the individual, should control all that is lower; so that which is highest and best in the state should rule. The highest intelligence and morality should govern.

The customs, laws, and institutions of the state ought to be ideal, at least they ought always be approximating the ideal. They ought to be an embodiment of the intelligence and moral conviction of the state. Every discovery of a new and beneficent civic principle ought as soon as possible to become a part of the law: and it ought to be enforced against the lawless.

### III *How shall we reach this ideal?*

1 Great discoveries are made and great principles are wrought out by individuals. The state can grow only by these discoveries and principles be-